



Contact:

Kirsten Yates

kyates@chattanooga.gov

423.443.5718 (Cell)

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Chattanooga Mayor Tim Kelly Announces New Hires

Mayor Kelly brings on three new deputies to further drive One Chattanooga priorities

Chattanooga, Tenn. (Friday, Oct. 21) — Mayor Tim Kelly's administration today announced the appointment of three new deputies to help lead key city projects and priorities in the areas of community development, human resources, and public health.

Don Walker is joining the City as Deputy Administrator for Community Development, Daniel Harrigan will serve as the new Deputy Chief Human Resources Officer, and Dr. Geeta Maharaj, DNP, RN, CPNP, will serve as the new Deputy Director of the Office of Community Health and Safety.

"It takes a talented, diverse team working across departments to truly create lasting change, which is why I'm thrilled to have Don, Daniel, and Geeta on board," said Chattanooga Mayor Tim Kelly. "From years of service in local government and community institutions, to on-the-ground work improving the health of some of our most vulnerable communities, this trio brings the breadth and depth of experience that will help ensure we get big things done for our residents."

Don Walker, serving as deputy under current Administrator for Community Development Anthony Sammons, will support the Mayor's and the Administrator's goals by directing, planning, and organizing the Department of Community Development's programs and operations to help strengthen and empower communities throughout the city. The department oversees neighborhood services, community centers, community development and other assistance programs, and coordinates with workforce-development initiatives.

Walker comes to the City with more than 30 years of experience in managing complex program operations and solving customer service challenges. He spent 25 years as the Director of Guest Services and Operations for the Tennessee Aquarium, where he implemented multiple company-wide programs and processes to improve operations and guest satisfaction, including the development of a company-wide customer service and training program that led to sustained increases in customer satisfaction ratings.

"Don spent decades strengthening programs and policies at the Tennessee Aquarium to meet the needs of residents and visitors alike, and I couldn't be more thrilled that he is bringing that unique expertise to the Department of Community Development," said department administrator Anthony Sammons. "Our teams work every day to strengthen Chattanooga's communities, and I look forward

to opening up even more opportunities for our residents to engage and lead in their neighborhoods with Don's added leadership."

Daniel Harrigan will serve as Deputy Chief Human Resources Officer directly under the Chief, Mande Lawrence, to help drive the City's day-to-day operational goals. He is charged with implementing processes and policies to continuously improve the employee experience, while inspiring teams in their work to advance the One Chattanooga vision.

Harrigan brings more than 13 years of experience in human resources to the City, twelve of which were spent working for Clark County in Washington State. Most recently, he served Clark County as a Senior Human Resources Representative, advising approximately 400 employees in eleven internal departments on policy and contract interpretation, labor relations, recruitment and compensation, and performance management.

"Greatness starts from within, and that's why I'm so excited to have Daniel on board to help advise and empower the nearly 3000 employees who serve our city every day," said Lawrence. "Having worked for local government for over a decade, Daniel understands first-hand the unique types of challenges - and opportunities - that city staff face on a daily basis, and I'm confident his expertise will grow our capacity to support every employee as we work together to create a city where everyone has the opportunity to thrive."

Geeta Maharaj, DNP, RN, CPNP, serving as Deputy Director of the Office of Community Health and Safety, will work under director Dr. Mary Lambert to lead community health programs designed to address long standing health disparities in Chattanooga. Dr. Maharaj will also provide leadership support to the Family Justice Center and the City's safety and gun violence prevention program, both of which also fall under the Office of Community Health and Safety.

Dr. Maharaj has more than 30 years of experience in health care, including advanced nursing practice, public health, education, and research, with an emphasis on serving vulnerable populations. She received her Bachelor of Science in Nursing from the University of Tennessee Chattanooga, and holds a masters degree in advanced practice from the University of California, as well as a Doctorate in Nursing Practice from the University of Utah.

"I am thrilled to have Dr. Maharaj join my Office to move forward our continued efforts to close public health gaps and address disparities," said Dr. Lambert. "Her extensive experience is a testament to her commitment to promoting health and serving communities in need, and I'm excited for her to bring that same passion and expertise in service to our city."

###